

# As For Myself

The Great Northwest: Portland-Tacoma

Some of our staunchest VILTIS friends live in that wonderful Northwest. Northern and Coastal Oregon-Washington area, readership-wise, is now second to California. Our only ALL-VILTIS club, whose every member is a subscriber, is located in Gig Harbor, Wash. Thus, the trip was one happy grand tour of wonderful reunions.

My sessions started bright and early the next morning with a class at the Pacific University in Forest Grove. Then, an afternoon session at Reed College and another session in Woodburn, Oregon with Red Thompson and friends from Corvallis and Salem. Red leads several teenage and pre-teen groups and they certainly are well trained in their dancing and well behaved. At first glance, seeing all the little's of under ten I worried how they'd fit in with all the adults, but after the first number all misgivings vanished. The youngsters were not only as good but some even better than some of the adults. Next day, after a brief visit in Woodburn, and Pancho's and some sightseeing had two more sessions with Reed College and a session with the Cascade Dancers of Rosemarie Doumitt.

Next morning Pancho took me to the bus and I was on my way to Tacoma where I was met by Rhoda Young, Phys. Eddist at Pacific Lutheran University. Mrs. Young is a Folk dance enthusiast from way back when... and folk dancing there is about as popular among the student body as it is at Brigham Young U, which is almost tops! We had a large turnout of enthusiastic students and all had a great time. After the session I observed them rehearse for their forthcoming May festival, and they were going through The Mill with "nary hitch". These "Lutheranians seem to make good Lithuanians." Rhoda and Walt Young hosted me during my visit in Tacoma.

The next day, March 14th, I had two sessions with the Tacoma school teachers: Grade schools in the afternoon—about 80 of them, Hi and Jr in the evening, who, with the additional folk dancing friends from Gig Harbor and Totemites, we again had about 80 people. Both sessions were most enjoyable, altho the evening session caused a bit of consternation when the record player acted up ornery fashion.

## Up Seattle Way: Vyts Reception and Institute

The announcement read: "Begorra! That Great Irishman, Himself, Vyts Beliaus..." etc. etc. Well, Begorra again! But I reckon that's the way I like it—to be an Irishman among the Irish, an Indian among Indians, Mormon among Mormons, Negro among Negroes, etc. So there I was, an Irishman, with St. Pat's decorations everywhere.

Many united on short notice to make a dinner for that "no good Irishman". Kathy and Ted Morgan, who also hosted me during my Seattle visit, suggested the idea and a number of true-blue VILITES combined forces to make the event a successful one. Each one of them worked hard and long hours and the results were tremendous. The feast was absolutely delish. A big whole salmon was baked, (no Irish stew, Friday), salads, side dishes, trimmings and cakes of the tastiest creation were served. The tables were decorated with Irish shamrock designs, greens, daffodils and spirea. Goodness!

The hard workers consisted of Kathy and Ted Morgan, Dr. Helen Kipple, Gene and Marian Leik, Dorothy Slotten, Agnes De La Torre, Joan Harris, Charles, Cheryl and Margaret Carrier, Douglas Farrell, Linda Dubljievich and Leone Wing, plus Eleonor Lipman and Alice Nugent

## Tours through Pueblos

During the Easter week Redwing and I left for New

Mexico to visit several of the Indian Pueblos. In Taos, Jenny Vincent, folk singer, collector of Hispano-American folk songs and recorder of same, plus Pueblo Indian music, hosted us. She took us down to the Taos pueblo where we were introduced to some of the folks, plus to Al Lujan, who is in charge of the Indian radio hour, broadcast in the Tewa and English languages. Of course, we also paid our respects to the grave of Kit Carson, who lived and lays buried in Taos. From there we headed to Santa Fe. Mrs. Evelyn Dahl, secretary to the curator of the Navajo Museum, and who is of tremendous help to us for the Indian issue, was especially gracious toward us by giving us her car and, thus, enabling us to cover a great bit of ground. Through her we met Mr. Joe Herrera, See Ru, a Cochiti Indian who conducts the Indian hour in Santa Fe in the Cochiti Language. There are only three Indian radio hours in the U. S. See Ru is also the youngest Chieftain and secretary on the Council of all the Pueblo Indians and the Pueblo representative in Washington, D.C. By good fortune we discovered that Ataloa, of Idyllwild fame, a noted Indian lecturer and folklorist, lived in Santa Fe. We paid her a visit and spent a pleasant evening in her company. Ataloa, a Chikasha Indian, teaches art and folklore in the Indian School of Santa Fe.

From Santa Fe we dashed over to Albuquerque and were hosted by our buddies, the Richard Geary's who took us to the excavated Kauau Pueblo which during Coronado's march through that area in 1640, was one of the largest. From there to the fascinating Zia pueblo, also visited by Coronado, perched interestingly on a high bluff overlooking a river. Then we retraced our route to Santo Domingo pueblo, which recently made headlines by refusing to accept a gift in goods and food stuff valued about \$20,000. We tried to take a picture of their unique church. We not only didn't succeed but also paid a \$5.00 fine for trying. The fact that it was Redwing, a full-blooded Arapaho Indian who was doing the trying, helped none. We still had to pay. No wonder they didn't need the \$20,000 gift!

A visit to the Yuma Indian reservation, through the kindness of Mr. Packer, was the last Indian tour.

With Dr. and Mrs. Freestone, who are in charge of the Country Cousins, we dashed over to Palm Springs to observe a program presented by the BYU group at the Palm Springs Mormon Church. Altho I've been with the BYU group of Provo, Utah, for well over a dozen years I never saw them present a program. I was unable to stay there all evening but did get to see at least half of the program and I was greatly impressed. They present a complete variety show of song, dance — folk and contemporary — and even comedy. They are a great bunch.

Another "first" on this trip for me was the Marineland in Los Angeles, which Mrs. Edith Gates was kind enough to take us. Those seals, dolphins, whales and porpoises were amazing! Such training, such intelligence in animals is unbelievable. I've enjoyed it thoroughly. After that, with the Gates and Brooker family we enjoyed a delicious Passover (last day) feast which Mrs. Brooker mother of Mrs. Gates, prepared.

After two brief and busy weeks at home which also involved an institute at the Stele Community Center where we celebrated VILTIS' 22nd anniversary, I left for Albuquerque where the folk dancers held a three-day folk dance institute, an enjoyable event. I was pleasantly surprised to see Mr. Manfred and Mrs. Bertha Holok who came in from Austin, Texas. I sure was treated royally.

On May 12, before leaving for California, Rodolfo Ulibarri and friends took me up to see Acoma, the ancient Indian Sky City. It was a fulfillment of a dream. I sped to Los Angeles to print May issue of VILTIS, the Idyllwild Institute on the 18th, at Stanford University on the 19th and 20th and back to Denver for two more weeks.

## With The Country Cousins of Yuma

On June 16th I joined the merry Country Cousins on their tour through the North Central States and three Canadian Provinces. The Country Cousins, under the direction of Dr. and Mrs. Alfred Freestone, have their own prettily decorated bus which was packed with a happy gang of energetic youngsters and costumes. The actual destination was the Square Dance Convention in St. Paul, Minn. Meanwhile, to cover the enormous expense of the trip the group stopped at various communities along the way to earn their food and travel expenses. The various communities usually welcomed us with a pot-luck supper and places for lodging. Some of the pot-luck feasts were regular smorgasbord, in fact, a number of them were so generous and plentiful, and except for the fact that herring was missing, no Scandinavian spread could compare with the variety. I noted that the smaller the community the more varied the food which was prepared with love, and the more wonderful the people.

The Country Cousins presented an extremely varied program covering a great number of nationalities in costume changes. The program included the American squares as well as Filipino, Lithuanian, Polish, Ukrainian and dances from many other countries. Their outstanding numbers were Tinikling (Filipino) for four, Hrechianiki (Ukrainian), Country Cousins in Orbit — choreographed for the Seattle Fair and the Zillertaler. They are a fine, clean-cut and funfull group and it was a delight and a privilege to spend two happy weeks with them.

## The Square and Folk Festival, St. Paul

About 10 thousand square dancers attended the conclave in St. Paul's huge auditorium. The folk dancers met at the International Institute and they held a festival of their own each evening and a street event in front of the Int. Institute on Saturday, June 22 with colorful and fine demonstrations and a great variety of foreign foods and delicacies, including a complete serving of shishkabab.

The folk dancers had a fine spot on the Square dance program and were quite a treat to the square dancers after a long fare of square dance exhibitions which tend to look the same after seeing four presentations.

There were a number (five) black light presentations during an evening. People seem to think that it is something great. I thought that it was an awful waste of time for the performer and viewer. The dancers were corralled into a small enclosure in the middle of the floor and the figures were lost. All one could see was something that appeared like seaweed or snakes swirling in a churning eddy. No pattern was visible. No feet or faces seen. But, I suppose, no one cared, as said above, after a while one square looks like another, so nothing was lost, but the people were generous and according to all a nice hand. For variety there was one square dance performed by dogs with their human partners. Yes, square dancing has gone to the dogs. Nonetheless, the dogs were smart and that was quite a feat and it certainly added a new wrinkle and a bit of humor. It was cute.

The folk dance contribution was an eight-minute medley of folk dances from many lands (not so many) in a great variety of costumes, except Scandinavian, altho St. Paul and Minneapolis are Scandinavian strong holds. I thought that the folk dance contribution was fine, except that too much was devoted to Yugoslav stuff. A kolo to a square dancer, because of its single step (Setnja for instance) can be as boring as too many square dances to a folk dancer. Aside of that, plus the fact of excellent live music, the folk dancers did a proud job. The Polish, Austrian and Russo-Ukrainian contributions were particularly well performed and the Country Cousins with their Tinikling and Krakowiak also got a thunderous hand.

## Killarny Country Cousins, Canada

After a performance in North Dakota we entered Canada where we danced for the Killarny, Manitoba, Country Cousins. They had the American flag on display, plus Irish decorations, and they sang the Star Spangled Banner with greater gusto than Americans. Even that screechy part of the anthem came out well. They were a wonderfully warm and hospitable group and we enjoyed our visit, except that the mosquitos, too, insisted upon welcoming us and they descended upon us like the birds in Hitchcock's movies or like an Egyptian plague — in the trillions! We had to use towels to swat our way through, and that's no fib.

From there we left for Regina, Saskatchewan where the Cousins performed at the Trianon ballroom and then to Southy, Sask. From there into Alberta and finally we came to Montana, dancing at Cutbank and Sheridan. Woodburn, Oregon

In Montana we parted ways. The Cousins continued going South and I west, to Woodburn, Oregon, where a Chuck-wagon breakfast was to open the July Fourth festival. This is a community effort and the town works hand in hand with the folk dancers, through Don Thompson. Now, the event attracts hundred of visitors.

The days before July Fourth were quite warm. Since the dancing was to have been in the outdoors, the committee slaved away the third on covering the dance area with parachutes. They tried so hard to keep the sun away that they actually succeeded. The next morning, when it was time for the nice outdoor chuck-wagon breakfast, instead of sun, the rain came. But hundreds of die-hards came out to eat their breakfast from wet place and sit under dripping trees and eat their cold scrambled eggs. What fools the mortals be! However, they demonstrated the determinations of the community and the folk dancers to support the event and not let rain damped the spirit. The drizzle finally stopped. The dancing started 7 AM and continued till 8 PM. A good time was had by all.

The next evening I had a hurried session at Reed College which Rose Marie Doumitt and Pearl Atkinson called together hurriedly (I sure hated to leave that evening, we were having a wonderful time) and at 10 PM I left the place to come to Idyllwild, Cal. folk dance camp.

I'll be seeing you all. Have a nice summer.

Pasimatysim Vyts-Fin

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